PZ 8 P277 E

FT MEADE GenColl

# THE ENCHANTED BIRL

ANTOINETTE DE COURSEY PATTERSON

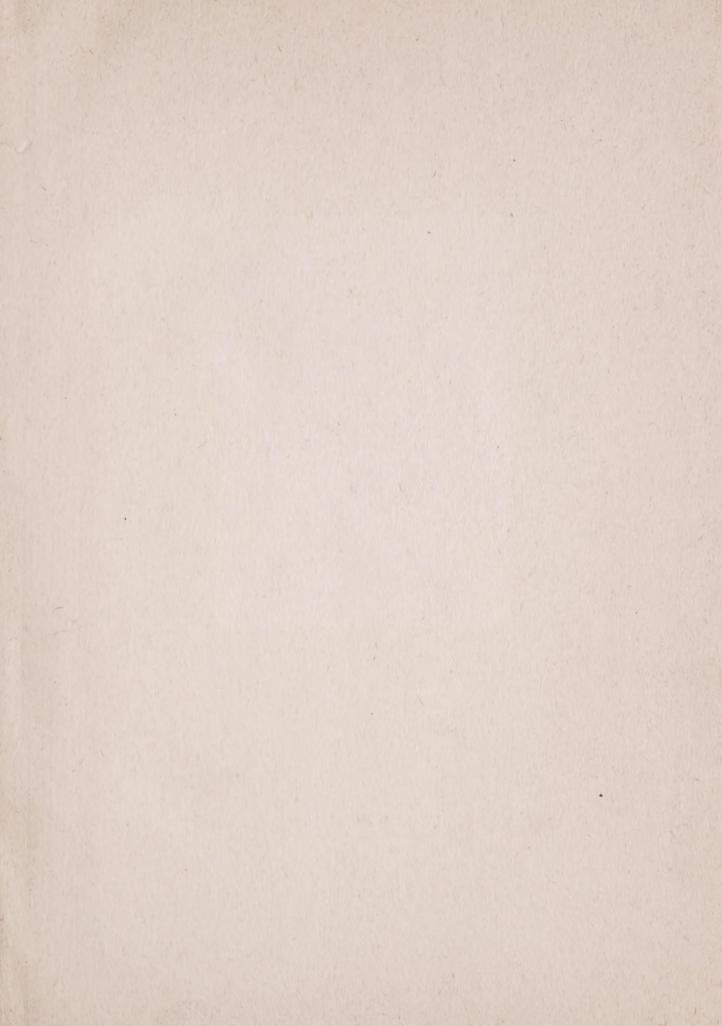


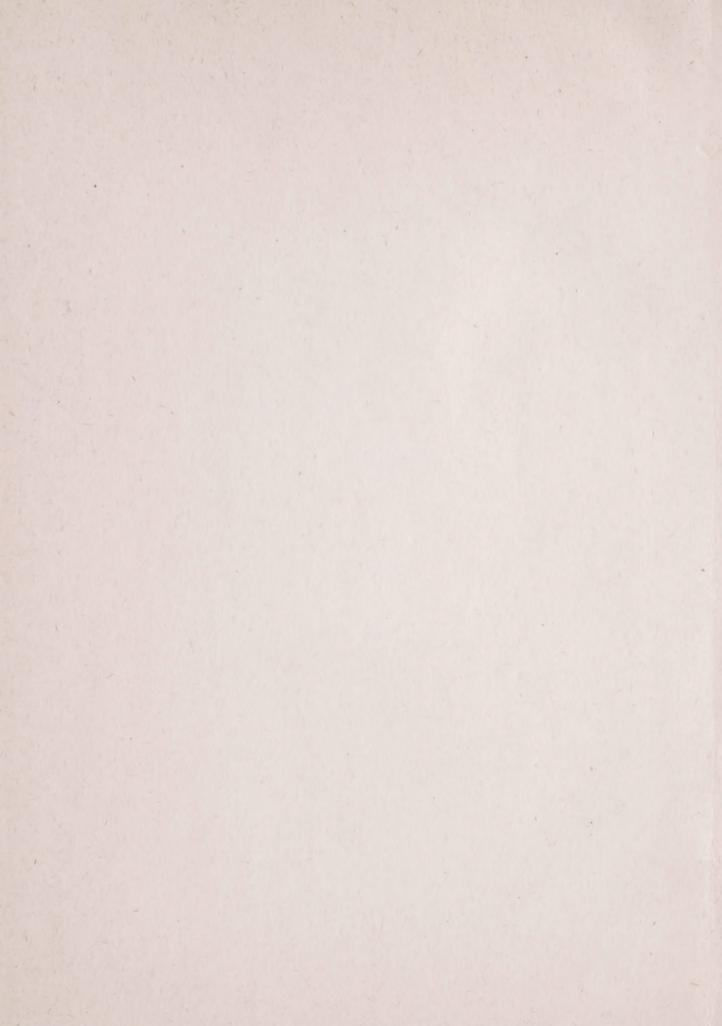
Class PZ8

Book +277

Copyright No E

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT











## The Enchanted Bird and other Fairy Stories

BY

ANTOINETTE DECOURSEY PATTERSON

Illustrations by ELIZABETH PILSBRY

THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY PHILADELPHIA 1917

P\877

COPYRIGHT

1917 \* BY

THE PENN

PUBLISHING

COMPANY



The Enchanted Bird and Other Fairy Stories

NOV -3 1917

OCIA476966 C 2

#### Contents

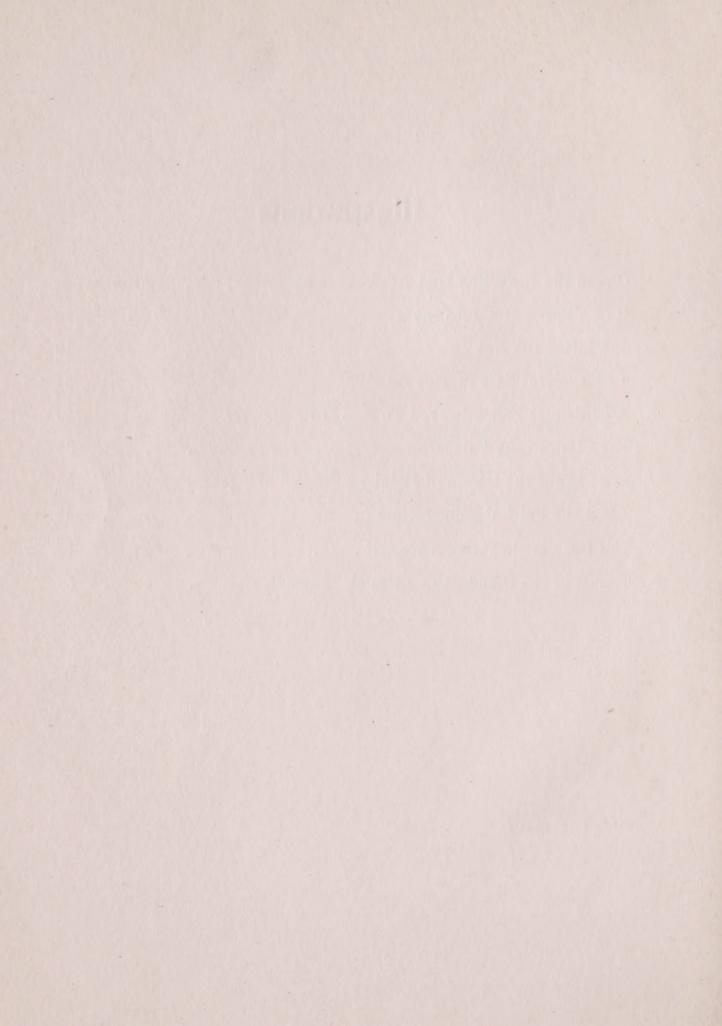
I.	THE ENCHANTED BIRD					0	9
II.	THE CAVE FAIRY						16
III.	THE ADVENTURE OF FAIRY ROSY-	WIN	rgs				18
IV.	THE SCRAP-BOOK FAIRY						21
V.	THE CHRISTMAS TREE FAIRY .						24
VI.	THE SNOW FAIRY						26
VII.	THE BLUE FLOWER		6				29
VIII.	THE FAIRY OF THE LILY			•	•	0	34
IX.	THE SWAN FAIRY'S PRESENT .						37
X.	GRANDFATHER AND THE FAIRY .						39
XI.	THE FAIRIES OF THE BRACKEN .						41
XII.	THE FAIRIES OF THE MILL						44
XIII.	THE MOON FAIRY						47
XIV.	THE HALL OF THE ROSES						50
XV.	NIMBLE-FOOT AND THE CRYSTAL S	SLIP	PERS		•		56
XVI.	THE CLOUD-FAIRY'S GRANDCHILD	REN					58
XVII.	THE FAIRY BALL						61

The author acknowledges the courtesy of "The Youth's Companion" in permitting these stories, "The Cave Fairy," "The Scrap-Book Fairy," "The Christmas Tree Fairy," "The Snow Fairy," "Nimble-Foot and the Crystal Slippers," to be reprinted here.

#### Illustrations

One of the Birds She Had Always Loved			Fre	PAGE piece
He Followed Her Into the Tree				10
She Lifted the Net	•			19
"I Have Her Safe in This Book!" .				21
A Christmas Fairy Swayed To and Fro				25
They Ran to the Palace				33
She Caught the Gleam of Rainbow-Colored	l W	ings		35
"It is the Fairies' Supper-Time".				45
The Dear Little Princess Herself				53
"Some of the Cloud-Fairy's Grandchildren	"			59

The Enchanted Bird and Other Fairy Stories



### The Enchanted Bird and Other Fairy Stories

I

#### The Enchanted Bird

AD any one told young Rudy he could be lost on the mountain where he had lived all his life, he wouldn't have believed it. Yet this was just what had happened on this lovely summer day. He had gone off the trail, and had happened upon twists and turns he had never dreamed of, and had then suddenly come upon a strange big tree—bigger than any six he had ever seen all put together. And to add to his astonishment, he saw, coming from a hole half-way to the top, curling blue smoke. He walked around to look at the tree from another quarter, and as he did so, there came out, from a door-like opening, a little old woman in a red cloak and a pointed cap.

"My dear child," she said, "you must have come a long way to find my hut, and I doubt not you are tired and very

hungry. Come in for a bit of soup and a good rest."

Rudy gladly accepted the old crone's invitation, and he followed her into the tree. She gave him a bowl of good broth, and bade him lie down on a pile of moss heaped in one corner, telling him after he had had a nap she would show him how to get home.



HE FOLLOWED HER INTO THE TREE

Rudy slept heavily and long; but when he woke there was still light in the sky.

"I thank you very much," he said to his hostess, as he picked up his cap. "I hope some day I may be able to do you a favor."

"You can do that now, my young friend," was the answer. "Just climb that tree yonder, up to the very top, and, from a nest you will find there, bring me the one egg it holds."

Rudy said he would do anything for her rather than rob a bird's nest. But when the old woman assured him the mother bird had long ago deserted the nest, and that she wanted the egg just for a curiosity, he took off his jacket and went up the tree like a squirrel. In the nest was the one egg, just as she had said, and as Rudy slipped it carefully into his pocket, he wondered how she had happened to know about it. He was about to come down from the tree when his quick eyes caught sight of another egg, almost covered with leaves. This one he slipped into his other pocket. He gave the old woman the first egg, but said nothing about the second. She seemed so glad to get it that she quite forgot to thank Rudy; but she remembered to lead him by yet other winding and unfamiliar paths to one well known to Rudy. And then, with extraordinary suddenness, she disappeared.

That night, when Rudy told of his adventure, his grand-mother with whom he lived only laughed. "You fell asleep in the woods," she said, "and had a strange dream."

Somehow Rudy forgot all about the egg, which remained in his coat pocket. Now his own little body kept it warm during the day, and at night his coat hung on a nail by the kitchen fire. So the egg in due time was hatched; and one fine morning what did Rudy see coming out of his pocket, as he was trudging along in the woods, but a most beautiful bird, fully fledged and strong of wing! It lit on his finger, and then further startled him by saying quite distinctly, "I am your little bird—but oh, don't put me in a cage!"

"Never," answered Rudy, venturing at the same time to

stroke the small golden head with his finger.

The bird, as though out of gratitude, sang him a bewitching song, and when he returned home flew up to a tree just outside his window. "Don't tell any one about me," the bird said.

So Rudy kept very quiet about his new little friend, who always went with him on the walks, which now never seemed

lonely.

One day, while out in the woods with the bird, he thought to himself it would be interesting if he could again find the old woman, and learn whether she, too, had such a bird as his. But when he left the path and started off in a certain direction, his companion grew strangely excited, and fluttered about in a most distressing manner.

"Oh, not that way!" the bird begged. Rudy paused. "Why not?" he asked.

"Alas! I may not tell you," was the answer, "but oh, not that way—at least not until to-morrow."

Rudy, generally so good-natured, this time proved quite obstinate. "You may stay on that tree until I come back," he said. "I'm sure I won't get lost this time, and I won't stay long."

The bird uttered a sound almost like the sob of a human being, but Rudy was already off on his search. After only a few turns he came upon the great tree, from which the blue smoke was still curling. But though it was the same old

woman who came to the door, her face was now both fierce and cunning, and she made no concealment of the anger the sight of Rudy evidently awakened in her.

"You little wretch!" she cried, brandishing a great black stick. "You stole the egg I wanted, and gave me some old hen's egg in its place. But I'll get even with you." And before Rudy could escape she threw a chain around him which tightened of itself about his waist. Then she drew him with her into the tree. There was no suggestion of savory broth this time; the only food being a great fat toad which lay on a board waiting to be cooked.

"Now," she said, fastening the chain securely to a nail, "here you'll stay until you tell me where the egg is you kept for yourself, or the bird—as it more probably is by this time."

But Rudy refused to open his mouth—and how he wished he had taken the advice of his little feathered friend! He felt sure the old witch, for such he now knew her to be, would not kill him, for then there would be no chance for her to learn of the whereabouts of the bird. But it was certain he must prepare for a most unpleasant experience. Rudy, though, had both a plucky and a loyal heart; and he determined neither to be frightened to death, nor, under any circumstances, to give up the little bird.

It was soon clear it was the witch's intention to try first the effect of starvation, for even when night came she offered Rudy no supper. Finally, in spite of the uncomfortable position he was in from being chained, he fell asleep.

All through his dreams flew the little bird, ever saying, "Oh, not that way—at least not until to-morrow!" When he awoke, he began to wonder why the bird had added, "not

until to-morrow." There was surely more mystery about the little creature than just its ability to talk. "Not until to-morrow"—there was something comforting in the words—and it was almost to-morrow now.

"Are you going to tell me what you did with that egg?" again demanded the witch, seeing Rudy was awake.

"No," replied Rudy stoutly.

"Very well, then," said the old hag, "we shall see"—and she put a huge kettle on the fire, remarking at the same time, "A little hot water will bring him to his senses."

Soon the water began to bubble and steam. "Ha," said the witch, lifting the lid, "it's about right now!"

She was just coming toward Rudy with the kettle, when somewhere in the distance the clock chimed the hour of midnight. Rudy braced himself with the thought, "It is to-morrow," and lo!—just as the boiling water was about to be poured on his head—some one with a strong young arm intervened. With a shriek the old witch sank in a heap on the floor, and Rudy looking up beheld standing before him the most beautiful girl he could ever have imagined.

"Your little bird," she said as she loosed his chains, "was an enchanted princess. If the old witch yonder did not get me until to-day, I was to be free to assume my natural form. You see now why I didn't want you to come here. But you have been so brave, dear Rudy, that all is well. What a narrow escape, though, we have both had! The witch was my father's enemy. To spite him, she had an evil friend who dealt in magic put this spell upon me. But her friend's powers were limited, and so a slight chance of escape was given the poor princess. And then one of the birds she had always loved laid one of its own eggs in the nest, in the hope

the old witch might be fooled—as she was," added the princess with a happy laugh.

"She won't trouble us any more," she continued, "for in losing me, whom she was going to cage, she has lost as well her power to work harm. But let us leave this wretched place at once."

As the two walked together toward the path which would lead them home, the princess said, "You and your grandmother must come with me to my father's kingdom, where you will receive much honor for what you have done for me; and when they talk about my wedding," she added shyly, "I shall say I will marry no one but ——"

"Rudy!" came the answer very quickly.

#### The Cave Fairy

SARA and Robert were in a state of the greatest excitement. They had discovered a cave in the mountain back of their summer home, on the side facing the sea! It was a very small cave, too small for either of them to crawl into, but they could see it was deep, deep. What might there not be living in it?—a dragon, possibly, or, better still, a real fairy! Indeed, before they had found the cave, Robert had seen a little grey figure moving about near by—a figure of just the size, Sara said, when he described it afterward, that fairies were supposed to be. Oh, if they could only see further in! But perhaps if they came every day and watched for a while they might again catch a glimpse of the grey figure. At any rate it was quite worth trying.

On one of their visits, the one on the day Robert was six years old, the children were allowed to take their luncheon with them; and in it was a little cake baked especially for the day.

"Let us leave a large and generous slice for the fairy," said Robert. So they cut a slice and left it on a stone inside the opening of the cave.

The next morning the cake was all gone—save for a few crumbs lying on the ground!

"The fairy has eaten it," whispered Sara. "Oh, Robert, perhaps she'll come out to-day!"

So the two waited among the bushes, their hearts full of new hope. Suddenly their sharp ears caught sounds in the cave, which up to that time had seemed such a silent spot.

Robert grasped Sara's hand for, even if he did happen to be a boy, he was just a little frightened. The sounds ceased; then they began again-and then, out of the cave, and straight seaward, flew a large, fair bird.

"It's only an old sea-gull!" cried Robert, disgusted and

disappointed.

But Sara tightened her hold on her brother's hand. "Robert," she said, "I don't believe it's a sea-gull at all-but the fairy herself, in disquise! I remember now that fairies never want any one to find out where they live-and you know you once saw a small thing dressed in grey near the cave—and what could have been easier than for a fairy to change her cloak into grey feathers?"

So the two children went home, quite happy and content, and told their mother that at last they felt sure they had

really seen the fairy who lived in the cave!

#### III

#### The Adventure of Fairy Rosy-Wings

LL the fairies had left the old house in Sycamore Hollow except Rosy-Wings, who was a lazy, easy-going sort of fellow and didn't in the least mind the way things were being allowed to go to pieces. The woman in charge of the place was very old, and so dim of sight that the cobwebs on the porch were never removed, but grew thicker day by day. This, however, exactly suited Rosy-Wings, who asked nothing better than to swing in a cobweb, which made a most excellent hammock, through most of a long summer afternoon. Morning-glories, too, grew thick about the pillars of the porch; and every evening Rosy-Wings would select a fine big one into which he would creep, just before it closed up for the night, so he might be free from draughts and damp air. the winter Rosy-Wings had a comfortable corner near the hearth, where he wasn't in the least afraid of being disturbed, since it was only the middle of the room that was ever swept by the old woman.

But it was during the summer that Rosy-Wings met with his Adventure.

One delicious morning he was lying in his hammock swinging lazily back and forth—one eye half open lest a spider should take it into its head to return to its deserted home—when he noticed that a humming-bird seemed to be



finding much honey in the nasturtiums which bordered the road. Having a very sweet tooth himself, he spread his wings and flew off in their direction.

Deep down into one of the flowers he thrust a tiny hand, and then began daintily to lick each sticky finger, never for a moment noticing what was coming along the road. Suddenly, as he came to the last finger, he saw it was a Youth with one of those dreadful nets for catching butterflies! Often, on account of his rose-colored wings, he had been taken for a butterfly—would this happen again? In sheer terror the poor little fellow tumbled off the flower onto the grass. Whereupon, without more ado, the Youth flung a net over him and held him a prisoner, while he opened a bag in which the fairy well knew poisons were kept for just such occasions!

Rosy-Wings was too frightened even to speak; so he lay there quite still in all his misery, but with oh, such an appealing look in his two bright eyes! It was at this very moment a Maiden came along the road. The Youth's back was turned—he was still stooping over his bag—so he did not see her. Quietly she slipped up to where the little prisoner lay, and deliberately she lifted the net so that he might escape!

This, though still horribly frightened, Rosy-Wings managed to do, coaxing his wings to carry him to the branch of a tree, quite out of reach of the net. There he rested a few moments until he could get his breath again.

Meanwhile the Youth had turned around and had seen the trick the Maiden had played on him. His face flushed hotly.

"That would have been the rarest specimen in my collection," he said.

"I just couldn't help it," the Maiden answered. "I can't stand seeing even a little butterfly look so sad without trying to do something."

Then she held out both her hands to him. "Will you not forgive me?" she asked.

The Youth took the outstretched hands. "On one condition," he answered.

But by this time Rosy-Wings felt quite recovered; so he spread his wings and flew back for another hour in his comfortable hammock where in dreams he could forget the dreadful fate that had so nearly been his.



#### IV

#### The Scrap-Book Fairy

In Grandmother's picture scrap-book there had lived, for oh! so many years, the dearest little fairy imaginable. Her full white dress was sprinkled with tiny rosebuds, not much bigger than a pin's head, and a wealth of them crowned her dainty curls.

The two little girls, Bessie and Ada, always asked to see her whenever they visited Grandmother, who would tell them wonderful stories about the fairy, always ending with, "And she's so full of mischief that it is a very good thing indeed I have her safe in this book!"

One Saturday, when Bessie and Ada arrived at their Grand-

mother's, they found the house in a most upset state. The parrot had got out of his cage and gone up a tree; the white Angora kitten had rubbed against the newly-painted cellar door, and was now a bright green; and last, but not least, the beautiful cake which was being baked for the children had been entirely forgotten, after it was put in the oven, until it was burned to a cinder.

But Bessie and Ada had been brought up to be useful children, and to help wherever they could. Ada, who was as active as any monkey, went up the tree and brought down Mr. Parrot, who was too frightened to try even to peck at her, while Bessie took hold of the kitten by its collar and neatly snipped off bunches of hair where the paint was thickest. And then they both told Grandmother they would much rather have the red-cheeked apples they could see on the side-board than any cake that was ever baked.

Grandmother smiled to see what capable and amiable little girls they were, though she kept repeating that she could not see how the parrot, the cat, and the cake had all managed to make so much trouble at one and the same time.

Luncheon wasn't quite ready, so Bessie picked up the old scrap-book, which to-day was lying on the table, to look again at the fairy. The book opened almost of itself at the familiar page—but this time no fairy was to be found.

"Grandmother," cried Bessie, showing the empty page, "she's not here—what has become of her?"

Grandmother looked and looked, but sure enough there was no rose-garlanded little creature to be seen anywhere—only two spots of glue where she had once been.

"That book blew open this morning," said Grandmother, and the fairy has escaped! Now we can account for all that

has happened. We must find her and put her back again, or who knows what will happen next!"

The children at once began the search, and soon Bessie's bright eyes found the fairy—in the fireplace almost at the other end of the room, looking, Grandmother declared, even more mischievous than ever.

"Now," said Grandmother, as she brought out a bottle of fresh paste and fastened the fairy to the page again, "we will go to the dining-room and enjoy our luncheon in peace!"

#### The Christmas Tree Fairy

THE big house on the hill, which had been closed so long, was at last open, its owners having returned from a far country where they had been living many years. They came back just at Christmas time and at once set up and trimmed a Christmas tree, although there were no young people in the house. The tree could be shared, they said, with the poor children of the neighborhood.

On Christmas Eve the tapers were lighted, and the huge doors of the hall were flung open to a dozen little boys and girls who had eagerly accepted the invitation to the big house.



All of them, with the exception of little Hilda, who had only been allowed to come at the last moment, had at some time in their lives seen a Christmas tree, though, of course, never one like this. In among its balls, stars, and icicles, which looked so real one almost shivered to look at them, were a number of toys. On each of these, the children were quick to see, was written a familiar name.

But little Hilda's eyes were lifted far above the branches which held the toys to where a Christmas fairy swayed to and fro from the very end of a branch. Never, the child thought, was anything so lovely! The bodice of the fairy's dress was a wild rose and the white tulle skirt was spangled with silver; the face itself was radiant and smiling, and the hand held a tiny wand tipped with a star. Of course, little Hilda said nothing; but in her heart she thought how



poor must seem the finest toy in comparison with the fairy.

After the children had looked at the tree to their heart's content, and had danced around it, singing a little Christmas song learned in school, a tall, fair lady, who Hilda thought was almost as beautiful as the fairy, began to distribute the gifts. But when she came to the last child, Hilda, it seemed no toy was marked with her name. The lady looked the tree all over in despair, when suddenly there was a faint whirring sound—and straight to Hilda's feet fluttered the little fairy!

The child gave such a glad cry that the lady said at once: "Pick it up, little girl; the fairy is your Christmas gift."

Of course, there were those who thought the fairy simply blew down, owing to a sudden draught from the window. But Hilda knew better; the fairy had come of her own accord, and just because she understood how much a little girl wanted her.

#### The Snow Fairy

THERE was nothing in which Angela more delighted than in coloring pictures in story books. As Angela was really clever with her brush, and very neat, her mother did not in the least object; indeed she had said that when Angela was a little older she should have lessons in painting.

The picture that Angela decided to color on this very cold afternoon was one that illustrated a story about a snow fairy. She would just have time to finish it before it grew dark, for, with the exception of the blue sky and a few fir trees, there was little else to be done. It would be best, Angela thought, to leave most of the paper white, as representing snow. To be sure there was the fairy herself; but she hardly counted, being only half as big as the icicle she was hanging to a fir branch. Besides, her gown must be left white, too, like the snow. So there would really be only her long fair hair and the star on her forehead—which it would take but a dash or two of blue paint to make shine.

The picture was finished before dark, and her mother said it was the best work Angela had yet done.

That night Angela went to bed feeling particularly happy, for the very next month she was to begin her painting lessons.

The little girl pulled up the warm woolly comfortable

close around her ears—so cold had the weather grown—and soon she was fast asleep. And then it was that the Snow Fairy stepped out of the book and stood on the bed within a few inches of her nose! In the bright moonlight she could be plainly seen.

Angela was delighted. "But are you not cold?" she asked, "and would you not like to get under my warm covers?"

The Snow Fairy laughed, and the laugh seemed like the tinkle of dolls' sleigh-bells. "I cold? Why, dear child, I melt away whenever I come out of the book if it gets the least warm. If it weren't for that wide open window I could never stand the heat of this room. But I'm glad it's cold enough here for me to stay a moment, for I want to tell you how much I like your last picture—you got just the right shade of gold for my hair—and to let you know that I, too, can paint! Jack Frost taught me."

Angela clasped her hands. "Dear, dear Snow Fairy," she begged, "won't you please show me some time just one of your pictures?"

Again the fairy gave her silvery little laugh. "When you get up in the morning," she said, "go right to the window of this room which faces north, and there you will see one of my pictures. It is all in white and silver—and oh, how I wish I could use color like you do!—But just standing on this bed is making me warm, so I must go right away. Good-bye, dear child "—and the tiny creature was gone.

It seemed only a few minutes after this that it was morning. Angela rubbed her eyes! "What a funny dream I had last night," she thought.

Nevertheless she went to the north window and there, covering the big wide pane, was a most wonderful fairy

forest! A road wound through it, on each side of which grew flowers, silver and white, and tall ferns. Some of the trees were like palms, while others were festooned with moss.

The picture was so beautiful that Angela stood before it spellbound—and then she began to wonder whether her experience of the night had been only a dream after all!

#### VII

#### The Blue Flower

ONE day, ever so long ago, two poor peasants heard a sudden cry from their little four-year-old girl who had been playing in the clearing around their house. They rushed out at once, and, to their utter astonishment, found a small boy, of about their daughter's age, looking frightened but unhurt as he lay on his back on a soft piece of moss.

"Where did he come from?" they asked in the same

breath.

"He dropped from the skies and rolled straight down that hill," was all the answer the little girl could give.

"A big bird picked me up, and then let me go," finally came

from the boy himself.

And this was all the peasants could find out. Sometimes the boy would say a word or two about his mother, who had gone away, or his father whom he called the king. And again he would talk of a big bird. But he was too little to give a clear account of anything, and so the peasants, even though they were very poor, decided to let the child stay with them and grow up as their son.

That he was of different birth from their own little Gerda, the peasant's wife knew well, from the fineness of the clothes which she put carefully away, lest an hour's tumbling around in the clearing should have quite destroyed them. The boy, whom they called Ernie, throve under the care and kindness he received, even though the fare was poor and sometimes scanty. And he was so happy, playing all day long with Gerda! As the months lengthened into years he talked less and less of his mother and the king, and never of the great bird, which his adopted parents were glad to think he had forgotten. At times, though, Ernie had very serious moments when he would be quite silent for a long time—just thinking, he said.

One day the children scrambled up to the top of a very high hill. "Look, Ernie," cried Gerda, "at this lovely blue flower I have found growing in the rocks. I have never before seen one so blue."

Ernie trembled all over at a sudden memory. "That was the kind of a flower that made the bird drop me," he said; "and it was on this hill. Throw it away, Gerda, quick!"

But Gerda did not throw it away. Instead, when the boy wasn't looking, she stuffed it into her little pocket. "It is a lucky flower," she thought, "since it made the bird drop Ernie right near our home."

Ernie, thinking Gerda had parted with the flower, soon broke again into merry laughter, and challenged his companion to a race down the hill and home to dinner. But all that evening the boy seemed strangely quiet; and the next day, after he and Gerda had set out for a walk, he told her he was going far away, that very morning, and that when they came to the end of the clearing he must say good-bye to her.

"Why are you going away, Ernie?" asked the distressed little girl. "Aren't you happy here?"

"Happier than I shall ever be anywhere without you, Gerda. But I have been thinking over things a long, long while. Your father is poor, and now that I am big and strong I must not be an expense to him any more. If I were to tell him or your mother, they would not let me go, so kind they are."

"I will not let you go, either, Ernie," and little Gerda tight-

ened her clasp on his hand.

Ernie pulled it gently away. "You must, Gerda. A prince is proud, you know, and cannot accept too many favors. But when I grow up to be a big man I shall come back to marry you."

Then the little prince ran off straight ahead as fast as he could go. Gerda slipped into the woods and followed him by a path so leafy he could not see her, though she kept pace with him all the time. To a young friend she met going toward her home she entrusted a message to her parents, explaining that Ernie was running away and that she had to follow to see no harm came to him. Whenever Ernie stopped at a house for a glass of milk, she ran on and got a drink at the next one; and not until the sun was setting, and the long shadows had begun to frighten her, did she come out on the road and join Ernie.

"Gerda," he cried, "what a naughty little girl you are!" But at the same time she saw Ernie looked very pleased. "I suppose you might as well go the rest of the way with me now," he continued, "for I feel somehow we're not much farther from my father's house than yours." Just then a cart came rumbling along in the direction in which Ernie wished to go. Since the weather was very warm and there was a

moon, the driver had chosen the night for his trip.

"Will you not take us along with you?" the boy called.

"Where are you going?" demanded the man, looking suspiciously at the two little figures out so late.

"Home," was the reassuring answer.

"Very well, then," said the man, "jump in."

"How do you know the direction of your home, Ernie?" whispered Gerda.

"It is toward the sunset," said Ernie. "I always used to watch the sunset from one of our front windows."

And sure enough, after driving all night, our little wanderers found themselves in the morning just outside a town where, in the distance, a stately castle could be seen.

"That is my home, Gerda," said Ernie, pointing to the castle. "I remember it all."

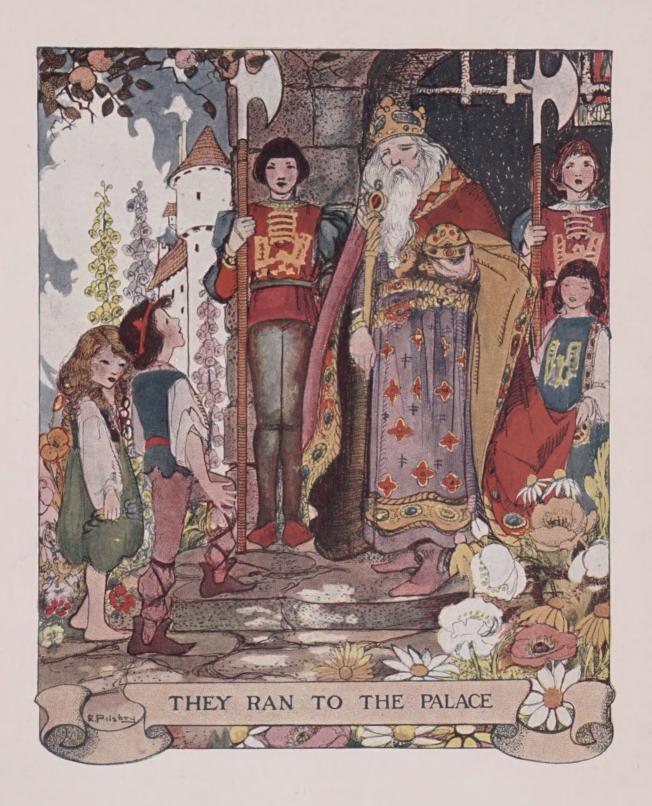
As the driver was about to turn off from the town, the two children, after thanking him, slipped down from the cart and started for Ernie's home, a good mile or two away.

It was very early in the morning and no one was about. Suddenly they noticed in the sky a great black object which was coming swiftly toward them. Ernie grew pale.

"Gerda," he said, "it is the bird come to carry me off again! I know about the bird now—it is the wicked fairy my nurse used to warn me about, who somehow, through an unfaithful courtier, got into the palace garden to do his evil bidding by carrying me away. There is no place for me to hide!"

If poor Ernie had not been a prince, he would have cried from terror and disappointment. Nearer the bird came, and nearer, and now it had swooped down and was fastening its talons in Ernie's coat! Suddenly Gerda remembered the blue flower. Pulling it from her pocket, she held it right under the creature's nose, who at once let go of his prey, and with a piercing shriek shot high into the heavens again.

Ernie took hold of Gerda's hand-in the other she still





held tightly the blue flower, which looked as fresh as though it had just been gathered—and together they ran with all their might to the palace.

The sorrowful-looking king was just at that moment coming out to walk in his garden, and Ernie rushed straight to his arms. The king, at once recognizing his long-lost son, was at first too overcome to speak. Then, taking the children with him into a beautiful rose-covered arbor, he got from them little by little the whole story, and how a blue flower had twice saved his son's life.

"Before your mother died," the king said, addressing Ernie, "she begged some one to find a certain blue flower which alone she had been told would protect her boy from an evil fairy's plots. This is undoubtedly the flower she meant. It will never wither, and Gerda must give it to you to wear always."

Then the king turned to Gerda. "We will send at once for your father and mother, dear child. They shall have a nice house with many trees around it, so they will feel at home. And you shall take lessons in languages and music at the palace, and learn many things beside—for some day, I doubt not, you will be a princess." The king, smiling, laid his hands on both their sunny heads.

#### VIII

## The Fairy of the Lily

A FAIRY one day grew tired of fairyland, and thought she would like to try living on the earth for a little change. So she looked about her for a home. She finally decided on a beautiful water-lily which, among many others, grew in a lake near the house in which Lucy lived. It had many advantages for a home; it was clean, and cool, and white; and at night she would never have any fear of robbers, so tightly would its walls close up.

Lucy saw something of the move—at least she caught the gleam of rainbow-colored wings as they hovered over the flower. Ben said it was only an old dragon-fly she saw—but then Ben was always very stupid about such things! He was good-natured, though, and promised his little sister that when he was canoeing about on the lake he would take care not to disturb one particular lily, and would warn any one else he happened to see not to pluck it.

But Lucy could not help feeling very uneasy for the safety of the fairy's home, and one day she came to her brother in tears.

"Ben," she said, "somebody has gone off with the lily, and I know the poor fairy will be frightened to death!"

But Ben told her not to be in the least alarmed. "Early this morning," he assured her, "when I was out fishing, if I



SHE CAUGHT THE GLEAM OF RAINBOW-COLORED WINGS

didn't actually see the fairy herself, I caught a glimpse of her wings—and they were making direct for the woods. I am sure she found it rather damp in that lily, and has moved to some drier place; or else she has returned to fairyland."

And as Lucy could not find any trace of the fairy in the woods, she decided this was what had happened. She went to bed that night feeling very pleased and satisfied—for after all there is no place in the world so well suited to fairies as fairyland itself!

## The Swan Fairy's Present

"ELSIE, dear," said Mother, "do wake up—it's after seven o'clock."

The little girl turned over in bed once or twice, and then she opened her eyes.

"Oh, Mother," she murmured reproachfully, "I was just having the beautifullest dream. It was about a white cloud which left the blue sky and came down to Grandfather's pond, and turned into a great white fairy bird, like one of Grandfather's swans. It was just telling me it had a present for me when you woke me up! I'm afraid now I'll never know what that present was."

"I'm afraid not," answered Mother, smiling. "But never mind, for a letter came last night asking us both to Grandfather's this afternoon, to spend several days."

Elsie was now wide awake. "How lovely to think we are going to the country to-day! Mother, why didn't you wake me up sooner?"

When they arrived at Grandfather's, Elsie asked if she might not go right to the pond to feed the swans.

"Certainly, my dear," said Grandfather, "but you will find one of them acting in rather a strange way; every once in a while running into the rushes, and hiding there for quite a time."

The little girl first got some cake from the pantry, and then

walked down to the pond. One swan was sailing proudly around the water's edge, but there was no sign of the other. Elsie had always loved these birds, which she had named Star and Snowball, and they had grown to know her and to look for food from her hands.

"Star," she said, as the swan came up for the cake, "tell me at once what has become of Snowball!" But Star said never a word, though he gulped down a piece of cake quickly enough.

"That is all you shall have, for I'm going to save this other piece for Snowball," and Elsie began to peer into the rushes, balancing herself very carefully on a big stone, as the place was marshy.

"Ah, there you are, Snowball," she cried, and, as Snowball came forward to get her share of the cake, what did Elsie see but a nest with a number of little grey downy things all huddled together in the coziest way. It was impossible for her to get near the nest without getting both feet very wet; besides the news of such a discovery must be told at once to Mother and Grandfather.

"There's a whole nest of grey baby swans!" she cried, running into the library. "Oh, Grandfather, mayn't I have one of them for my very own?"

Grandfather took up his hat and handed Mother a coat. "We must all go out to see the youngsters," he said. "Elsie, since you found them, you shall have first choice. They won't stay grey very long, but will turn a funny brown color, and not before a year will they be a pure white."

Mother suddenly took the hand of her little girl, who was jumping up and down with excitement. "I wonder," she said, "if after all this may not be the very present the Swan Fairy was bringing you in your dream!"

#### X

## Grandfather and the Fairy

THERE was but one thing, according to Jeannie, which kept Grandfather from being quite perfect—he did not believe in fairies. Indeed he even made all manner of fun of the mere idea of such things; and when Jeannie said she had once seen one, with her own eyes, down by the ruined mill, all dressed in green with a little red cap, he told her plainly she had a bright imagination!

But Jeannie's faith was not to be shaken. She talked about the fairy constantly and hoped some day it might again appear when she and her grandfather happened to be walking together.

But it was winter now, and the old gentleman had lately taken a great fancy to the hall fire, where he often dozed for an hour at a time. If any one ever charged him, though, with having been asleep, he would grow almost angry, and say, "What nonsense!—Why, I was making out in my head all the accounts for the year. You know I never sleep in the daytime—don't approve of it!"

On one very cold afternoon Jeannie was studying her lesson by the fire, near Grandfather, who was leaning comfortably back in his armchair with one foot resting on the fender. Jeannie presently, without looking up from the book, asked the meaning of a new word. But Grandfather must have

been very deep in his accounts, for he made no answer. The little girl repeated her question, putting her hand on his to claim attention.

And then it was this curious thing happened. Instead of

giving her the meaning of the word, he said:

"Jeannie, will you please lift that little fairy very carefully off the toe of my boot? I'm afraid to put my foot down for fear she'll fall in the fire. Her pretty red cap has already tumbled in!"

"Grandfather," exclaimed Jeannie jumping up. "Oh, where is she—I don't see her at all!"

Grandfather rubbed his eyes. "I wasn't asleep," he said, "for I never go to sleep in the daytime!"

"Then," said Jeannie triumphantly, "maybe now you'll believe in fairies!—If only, though, they didn't get away so quickly!"

And when Jeannie told them all at supper that night that Grandfather had at last seen a fairy, the old gentleman never denied it. For, if he had, he knew some one would be sure to say he had been fast asleep!

#### XI

### The Fairies of the Bracken

IRENE, unlike most little girls, was quite as happy when she had no children to play with as when she had a half dozen or more. The neighborhood where she lived was full of girls and boys, with whom she would romp and laugh and seem as merry as the merriest. But Aunt Eleanor never hesitated to ask her on a visit to her big lonely house which, so thick were the trees, seemed set in the very heart of a forest. Aunt Eleanor had never been strong, and Irene was the only one of her nieces she ever felt she could invite—so quiet and gentle could the child be.

For her own part, there was nothing that Irene enjoyed more than these visits, which seemed to her like trips to fairyland itself. She felt that some day she really would come across fairies; and at this time of which I am writing she was quite sure that at last she had!

Down beyond the woods, but still within Aunt Eleanor's grounds, was a big bit of marsh-land where grew tall ferns and rushes. Irene loved to wander by the edge of this bracken, where often she would find pollywogs, and occasionally a cunning green frog. But on this late spring afternoon she had little thought for such things, for well in among the rushes she had caught a glimpse of little white-gowned creatures bending toward each other as though telling secrets!

Queer lights, too, were fluttering about, which, of course, might be fireflies, but which seemed much more like fairy lanterns. Irene could not get near the little white swaying things on account of the marsh, but she watched them until she felt Aunt Eleanor would worry if she did not return.

At supper that evening she told her aunt she was sure the bracken was the home of fairies.

"I shouldn't be at all surprised," answered Aunt Eleanor; "it's about the only place left where the poor things can feel they won't be disturbed. The automobiles, going over the road through the woods, have probably frightened them quite away from there."

"Dear Aunt Eleanor," said Irene, "would it be too long a walk after supper for you to let me show them to you? The moon is coming up and it will be as light as day. We can walk ever so slowly."

Aunt Eleanor smiled, as she rose from the table. "This is one of my well days," she said, "so let's go now before it grows late."

Irene, too delighted for words, wrapped a warm shawl about her dear aunt, and off the two went, hand in hand, toward the bracken.

Even before they got there, Irene could point out the gleam of little white skirts—so bright was the moonlight—and when they got nearer they could see myriads of the fairy lanterns.

Aunt Eleanor was much interested. "I have never seen so many fireflies," she said to herself; then, in a whisper to Irene, "if those white creatures are not fairies, I simply don't know what they are. In all the many times I have been down to this bracken, never before have I seen such things!"

Irene fairly hugged herself with delight over the mystery in which they seemed wrapped.

"See, Aunt Eleanor, they are whispering together-oh, if

they'd only tell us some of their secrets!"

"If they only would!" echoed Aunt Eleanor. "We must go back now, though; but the first thing to-morrow morning you must run down here, and see if, in the daylight, you can find any traces of them."

The next morning Irene was early at the bracken. No fairy lanterns were to be seen, but in among the rushes were dozens of white iris in full bloom.

Irene, much disappointed, came back with the news to her aunt. But the disappointment speedily vanished.

"Irene," said Aunt Eleanor, "this is the very first time the white iris has ever bloomed in that bracken. We won't allow any of it to be plucked, for maybe they are flowers during the daytime, and at night are fairies. You know last evening, when it was so still, we both heard them whispering together!"



TRIS' big brother had come home from boarding-school for the summer holi-

days, bringing with him a friend who he knew would love the country as much as he did.

On the night of their arrival the two boys stood on the porch looking toward the river, where the next morning they were going to fish.

"What is that old ruin," asked the friend, "over there on the bank?"

"Just an old mill. It is tumbling down fast. No one lives there any more."

"Except the fairies," put in little Iris shyly.

Big Brother laughed good-naturedly. "I forgot about

them," he said. "What have they been up to lately, Iris?" He turned to his friend. "The fairies never will come out, Bob, for any of the family but Iris!"

"Fairies are usually invisible—and they don't like to be

laughed at," said Iris.

"Then we won't laugh at them, little sister."

"All right. And now, if you'll both come with me, I can show you just exactly where they are."

The boys took little Iris by each hand, and the three of them trotted down to the old mill, while Mother called after

them not to forget it was nearly supper-time.

"It is the fairies' supper-time, too," said Iris, "and though of course you won't see the fairies themselves, you'll see their lights, as they go about looking for food. This spring they've bought some electric torches, just like the one Father has, only smaller than the very smallest star!"

"How exciting," exclaimed Big Brother. "Let's run

faster!"

Soon they reached the old mill. "Now," said Iris, "come with me."

They climbed over the tumble-down stones of a wall—the door had long ago caved in—until they reached the inside of the mill, which was quite open to the sky, and overgrown with grass and bushes. The vegetation looked more rank by contrast to that outside the mill, which was kept closely cropped by many flocks of sheep.

"What a fine climber Iris is," said Bob admiringly.

"Yes," assented Big Brother, "she does pretty well for a girl."

"Now we will sit down," said Iris, "and wait until it grows darker."

They did not have long to wait. "Look," cried Iris, half under her breath, "one fairy has lighted her torch already!"

Sure enough, a tiny light was seen, flashing from place to place, and sometimes shining above the tallest bush. For a moment Big Brother seemed puzzled.

"I have never," he said turning to his friend, "seen fireflies before in this country."

But Iris did not hear him—and at any rate fairies' torches could easily look like fireflies without being them! "How I wish I could see what they are finding to eat!" she cried.

Whereupon Big Brother said they must go home to get their own supper.

All the way back to the house, Bob helped Iris to wonder what the fairies found for food. They at last decided that for fruit they probably had the seeds of a wild-rose they both saw growing there; and for cake the little wee round mush-rooms which could easily be discovered among the leaves and moss with the aid of the electric torches.

#### XIII

### The Moon-Fairy

ONLY on the nights when the moon was full would the Moon-Fairy come to the rose-garden to spend a few minutes with the child Myrta who, of all the big or the little folks in the great house, was the one who really loved the roses. To Myrta's pleadings to come more often, the answer was always that no moonbeam was strong enough to bear even her light weight save at the full of the moon.

On these whitest nights, after the house had gone to sleep, Myrta would put on a big coat and slip out to the small balcony which opened from her room, and up which some of the roses of the garden climbed. It was from this balcony she had the talks with her strange little friend, who always chose the moonbeam that would transport her to the nearest rose.

These visits were so few and so brief—for the moonbeam seemed always quivering as though anxious to return from whence it came—that Myrta had not yet found out half the things she wanted to know: about the mountains of the moon, for instance, whether they were all shining when you were near them, and whether their flowers were even fairer than those of earth. Once she had asked the fairy her name; but the reply was, since there were no sounds on the earth exactly like those on the moon, she might have great diffi-

culty in remembering it—but that if she wished she might call her Serena.

And with this Myrta had to be content—though there were times when she longed greatly to know what some of the moon sounds were like.

On this particular night the Moon-Fairy, who was usually rather quiet, seemed very eager to talk.

"You are twelve years old to-day, Myrta, are you not?"

"Yes," replied Myrta, "and I feel I am growing up so fast."

"Myrta"—Serena's voice was both sad and sweet—"this is the last time I may come to see you. We are not permitted to visit mortals after they are twelve years old."

Myrta's eyes filled with tears. "What am I going to do without you?" she cried. "I have looked forward to seeing you more than to anything else—because you tell me about beautiful things."

Then Serena smiled radiantly. "Since you feel that way, dear child, I may in parting give you a rose from the Crystal Mountain. This makes me so happy, for I have not been able to give one now for over a hundred years—so few are the children who love Beauty with their whole heart. And to none others may the flower belong. As I give you the rose, I shall whisper in your ear my name, and the rose will help you to remember it."

Myrta, entranced, leaned over the balcony, while the Moon-Fairy bent nearer and pinned on her breast a most lovely flower, white and transparent as flame.

"Wear it always, dear Myrta," Serena said, "for if you do not it will wither away, and the earth and the skies will seem less and less fair. It is invisible to all eyes but your own." She then brought her mouth close to Myrta's ear—

and the name she spoke was so beautiful that for a few moments Myrta could realize nothing else. When at last she looked around her, Serena was gone.

Myrta returned to her room, happy and sad at the same time. But the sadness passed away, and the happiness remained, for had she not the Moon-Fairy's flower which she could wear always? Presently she fell into the sweetest sleep.

When Myrta grew older she composed a piece of music, of such witchery that many begged her to tell them what had suggested the theme.

But Myrta would only smile and shake her head. For who would believe her, she asked herself, if she said that the refrain was just a little Moon-Fairy's name?

#### XIV

### The Hall of the Roses

MANY years ago, in a far distant kingdom, there was the deepest grief and mourning. Its beloved young Princess had been spirited away—undoubtedly by an old witch who had been troubling the land for some time. The aged King, her grandfather, wept day and night, so fond was he of her, and so proud of her beauty and sweetness. Indeed he only stopped shedding tears long enough to sign a decree in which he promised to give her in marriage a year hence, when she would be sixteen, to any worthy subject who should find her and restore her to him.

Now there was in this kingdom a youth who tended the royal herd—a strange fellow in many ways, and one much given to dreaming, though never to the neglect of his duties. It was said that Nature often told him of her secrets, and he could even catch sometimes the words the wind whispered. Also he possessed, though none of his friends knew this, a pair of tiny wings, inherited from a fairy great-grandmother, which, if fastened to his feet, would enable him to outdistance any one in any race. These wings he had never had occasion to use, but always wore them attached to his heels and closely folded.

Ever since the little Princess had been carried away, the youth had been exceedingly sorrowful. Having once seen her,

he knew how beautiful she was; and of how good she must be judged from her lovely smile. Indeed, so dear had she become to his every thought, he would gladly have given his life to rescue her, with never hope of a reward.

Every day now, while still watching his herd, he would climb to the top of a tree on the outskirts of a small bit of woodland, and listen and listen, in the hope that the wind might some day bring news of the Princess which his ears might prove keen enough to catch. And one morning, oh, so softly, he clearly heard "In the Hall of Roses. Rescue me." He listened again—but never a word came as to where the Hall of Roses might be. However, day after day, he still climbed the tree; not only listening, but looking carefully in all directions to see if by chance any path would open out to him which would seem to lead to the captive maiden. And then one morning he happened to see, hopping along toward his tree, a huge, long-haired rabbit. In those old days it was nothing unusual to see animals five or six times their natural size, but this one seemed to act in a most peculiar manner, being, the young herdsman felt sure, quite unconscious of his presence in the tree.

Now just at the entrance to the woods was a large clump of roses, all in bloom; into this the rabbit, gathering itself together in a bunch, suddenly sprang and at once disappeared. The shepherd quickly slipped down from the tree and examined the spot. But no clue as to where the rabbit went could he find; and the rose-bushes seemed to differ in no manner from those that might be found by any wayside. The shepherd was much distressed over what he thought looked like a lost opportunity, for the strange-looking rabbit somehow had the air of knowing the secret which was puz-

zling the whole country. There was only one thing he could think of, and that was to climb the tree next morning to see if the same thing repeated itself. If the rabbit returned and prepared again for a mighty spring, the youth made up his mind he would land on the creature's back, and go with it wherever it went. The next day, at precisely the same hour, along came the rabbit—and, as it sprang, the nimble shepherd was upon its back with both hands clutched in its long hair. The animal was unable either to check its spring or to shake the youth off, and in less than a second's time, after the plunge into the bushes, they were both in a most exquisite hall whose walls were all of pink roses with ceiling of white ones-while the youth now found himself on the back of a hideous old witch, with his hands still holding on by her long hair. The witch tried hard to shake him off; but the presence of mind of the young shepherd did not desert him. felt no harm could come to him while he had the witch at so great a disadvantage. So he only tightened his hold and looked about him.

And there, in the furthest corner of the beautiful room, was the dear little Princess herself; looking so frightened and so unhappy!

"Princess," the youth called softly, and his voice was very reassuring, "come a little nearer so I may talk with you, for I dare not let go to come to you."

When the Princess was within a few feet, the shepherd managed to get his hands for a moment over both ears of the witch, who meanwhile was struggling more frantically than ever to free herself, and to whisper, "Take these little wings off of my heels, fasten them to your own, and when I persuade the witch to lead the way out of this place, do you jump on



THE DEAR LITTLE PRINCESS HERSELF

behind me. Then, with the speed the wings will give you, hasten to the palace and have three stout men come to meet us with heavy chains. And order others to make ready a cage, strong, as though for a ferocious beast—and, little Princess, try not to be frightened."

The Princess at these last words straightened herself to her full height, which wasn't so very great after all, but gave her a pretty dignity. "I am not afraid now," she said; and she even smiled.

Then the youth moved his hands away from the witch's ears. "Do be reasonable," he said to her, and then added, "I shall stay just where I am for years and years, unless you turn into a rabbit again, and take me out of this place and halfway to the town, for I'm already late for dinner. If you will do this, I will then let go your hair and jump right off your back."

The old witch was by this time pretty well tired out herself; so, seeing she had a youth to deal with who meant just what he said, she in the twinkling of an eye became a rabbit once more. With a spring she was out in the open again with the youth still holding on tight, and the Princess, who had jumped on behind him.

And now the wings on the little heels spread out, and, faster than any rabbit, she was at the palace with her strange tale. But in spite of its strangeness, the overjoyed King ordered the men to do exactly as she bade them. In a short time they returned, leading a monster rabbit in chains, while a tall, fair youth walked beside it.

The Princess ran joyfully forward to meet her rescuer. "Oh, Grandfather," she cried, "if it hadn't been for this friend, I should still be in the Hall of Roses, where the witch was keep-

ing me until I would promise to marry some day her dreadful son. She thought the beautiful flowers would make him seem less frightening—but they didn't—they made him seem much worse!"

But the old King said, as his eyes sought the youth's, "My little girl, forget all about that, for I have another for your husband a year hence."

And the Princess, who was quick to guess whom he meant, smiled more radiantly than ever before.

The old witch kept to her rabbit form, and remained caged for the rest of her life—for the Princess could not bear the thought of killing anything. Indeed, so kind was that little heart, she arranged that every day the rabbit should have twelve fresh carrots added to the regular meals—which in that country were quite a delicacy.

#### XV

## Nimble-Foot and the Crystal Slippers

THE fairy Nimble-Foot loved dancing better than anything in the world. She not only danced all night when the moon shone, but nearly all day as well; and there were a number of other fairies to whom she had taught a variety of steps.

But ever since Nimble-Foot had happened to overhear little Greta reading the story of Cinderella to the kitten, she had herself longed, not for a prince, but for a pair of glass slippers. She felt sure she would be able to dance better in them than in any other kind. So Nimble-Foot went to see the fairy cobbler, who lived in the next mountain, to beg him to make for her and her friends slippers like Cinderella's.

The cobbler, however, was a surly old fellow who didn't like changes. "Besides," he argued, "if you wear any other kind than those you have always worn, although you can be invisible whenever you wish, your shoes never can, and will always be seen of mortals!"

But Nimble-Foot said she didn't mind that in the least; and indeed coaxed so prettily, and danced for him with such grace, that at last the cobbler gave in and said he would make for all of them slippers of crystal—of which his mountain was full, and which was finer than any glass.

So within a week's time Nimble-Foot and her friends were fitted out with the most fascinating slippers the world had ever seen. How the fairies all danced! Over the grass, over the trees and hedges, and especially on the river and the crests of its tiny waves. They loved it on the water, where there was never any dust.

One sunny day Greta took the story of Cinderella down to the river's edge to read all over again. As she finished the book she laid it down with a little sigh—so beautiful was the tale. Then, looking about her, she fell to wondering if the Prince had taken his bride to as lovely a home as hers was, with a tree so big and shady as the one under which she was sitting, and whether a river ran by their castle.

As Greta gazed on the river, she noticed that at her feet it seemed one mass of sparkling lights—"as though the sun were shining on myriads of tiny glass slippers," she said aloud. Whereupon Nimble-Foot laughed—or was it just the tinkling of wavelets lapping the shore?—to think how quickly Greta had guessed the truth!

#### XVI

## The Cloud-Fairy's Grandchildren

THERE was once a fairy who lived in a cloud—or so it pleased Irene to imagine—who had more than a million grandchildren. It was the fairy's fancy to dress some in violet, some in blue, some in green and yellow, and others of them in pink. Then she would take them for a walk, making them hold hands and run in front of her. She always arranged that those whose gowns were of the same color should keep together, for she thought this made a more beautiful picture.

Now it was ever the old fairy's wish the children should stay among the clouds, where no harm could happen to them. Sometimes, however, a number of them would escape and, before she could stop them, manage just to touch the earth! It was then that people called to each other, and hurried to door or window to see an especially fine rainbow.

But it was never very long before the children's grandmother was after them, calling them, in a tone they dared not disobey, back to their cloud-home. Some of the little fairies, though, had kept their eyes well about them, and, after a few trips risked in this manner, felt they knew their way to the park quite well. They thought, some of them, they should like to stay there forever, so they made up their minds at the first chance they would again slip off, and this time get well



"SOME OF THE CLOUD-FAIRY'S GRANDCHILDREN"

out of reach of their grandmother's voice before she should discover they were missing.

Early one morning Irene saw a very tiny rainbow playing all about on the wall of her room!

"There are some of the cloud-fairy's grandchildren!" she exclaimed delightedly. "Maybe they take my new grey paper for cloud, and my looking-glass for the sun!"

Right after breakfast the little girl ran next door to Cousin Irene, who from the very first had been interested in these fairies to tell berell about what had been ended

fairies, to tell her all about what had happened.

Cousin Irene listened to this new chapter in the story, then she said:

"Come to my room, dear, and I will show you something in which I think a few of these same little wanderers must have made a home."

Cousin Irene then brought out a most beautiful opal brooch which gleamed with many-colored lights, almost as bright as Irene's eyes.

"When you are older, Irene," continued her cousin, "you shall have this brooch. It has always been a favorite of mine, and I know you will take care of it. And as for the fairies we see in it—well, I am sure they will feel quite at home with you."

#### XVII

# The Fairy Ball

THE fairies who lived in Fern Dell suddenly made up their minds to give a fancy dress ball, and to invite just one mortal, the little Sylvia whose home was near by. Sylvia was thus favored because she was an only child, and lived so far away from other children she had no one to play with but the fairies—who had grown quite fond of her, and often whispered in her ear when she was asleep where the prettiest flowers grew.

The night of the ball, a fairy called through the window to Sylvia, soon after she was tucked in bed, that in an hour they would come for her, and, as a number of them together were very strong, she could ride to the ball on their interlaced wings.

Later there was the faintest whirring sound outside Sylvia's window; whereupon the little girl slipped again into her clothes, and went off on the wings of her friends the fairies!

The spot chosen was the sweetest in beautiful Fern Dell, one where the moss was oh, so soft and green! Under the light of the moon Sylvia thrilled to its beauty. Right in the center of this mossy patch was a round white mushroom, which gleamed almost like another moon. Around this the fairies, after they had placed Sylvia on a bank near by, ranged themselves for the dance. Sylvia knew many of the little

creatures by name, though at first it wasn't easy to tell them in their new fancy dresses. She saw that most of them represented flowers. Silver-Dew was all in white, like a great fair begonia with her wide skirts; dear little Honey-Sweet was surely a wild-rose, and Sylvia was delighted to see how very becoming to her pink was; Mirabel, who had such dark hair, was in purple and scarlet, like a fuschia, while Starry-Eyes was more radiant than ever in a tiny Pierrette dress of white and black. The boy fairies for the most part wore armor, which looked to Sylvia as though made of shining beetles; and one of them waved to and fro a spray of bluebells which gave forth the sweetest music. Then the fairies, singly, two and two, sometimes three together, danced hither and you all over the mossy place. Never before had Sylvia thought anything could be lighter than thistle-down.

When the dancers were tired out, they asked Sylvia to join them at their feast, which was made up of juicy green leaves, currants daintily sliced, and fairy nectar, clear like dewdrops, served in buttercups.

Sylvia thanked them all prettily, but said it would perhaps be better for her to return home lest her mother should miss her and be frightened. Sylvia was always a thoughtful child, and besides did not wish to outstay her welcome.

"What a beautiful dance it was!" Sylvia cried, clasping her hands together, as her little friends spread their wings to carry her home. Within a few moments she was back in her' bed again.

Sylvia seemed very sleepy when her mother called her the next morning. "I am so tired," she murmured, "for I was at a fairy ball last night."

But her mother laughed and said, "What nonsense; you

were only dreaming, dear." Then she added, "I have long thought, though, that you should have another playmate beside a fairy; so I am going to write for your cousin Helena, who is just your age, to pay you a long, long visit." . . . Sylvia and Helena are having great fun together now, though of course the fairies never come around any more—Helena is so big and strong, and laughs so heartily. But Sylvia is loyal, and is not likely to forget her little friends—nor does her mother want her to altogether, lest she lose some of her gentle, pretty ways.

